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# HOW TO GET INFORMATION

## From the United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications April 1997

This directory lists sources of information in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its various agencies. **How To Get Information** is available electronically via the Internet World Wide Web at <http://www.usda.gov/news/howto/howto.htm>. When changes occur within agencies listed within How To Get Information, it is requested that they promptly send changes to **Shirley E. Adams**, Office of Communications' Coordination and Review Center, Room 440-A, Jamie Whitten Building, Washington, DC 20250-1350; FAX 202-690-3611; Internet e-mail [shirley.adams@usda.gov](mailto:shirley.adams@usda.gov).

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# ***Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services***

**FARM SERVICE AGENCY** administers farm commodity, crop insurance, and conservation programs for farmers and makes farm ownership and operating loans. FSA programs are primarily directed at agricultural producers or, in the case of loans, at those with farm experience. Through the Commodity Credit Corporation, the agency provides financing for the purchase, storage, and shipment of commodities in federal stocks. Additionally, FSA provides emergency conservation and assistance programs to farmers.

**FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE** represents U.S. farmers and the food and agricultural sector abroad through a network of overseas offices. FAS collects, analyzes, and disseminates information about global supply and demand, trade trends, and market opportunities. FAS seeks improved market access for U.S. products; administers export financing and market development programs; provides export services; carries out food aid and market-related technical assistance programs; and provides linkages to world resources and international organizations.

**RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY** improves the economic stability of agriculture by providing producers a sound system of crop insurance. Federal crop insurance covers losses due to unavoidable causes such as drought, excessive moisture, hail, wind, frost, insects, and disease. Currently 62 major crops are insurable. Crop insurance is available from crop insurance agents and certain Farm Service Agency offices. Insurance protection must be purchased prior to sales closing dates that vary by crop and region.

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# ***Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services***

**FOOD AND CONSUMER SERVICES** administers federal food assistance programs including food stamps; food distribution; supplemental food for women, infants and children; school lunch; school breakfast; special milk; child care; summer feeding; and other child nutrition and family food assistance programs.

**CENTER FOR NUTRITION, POLICY AND PROMOTION** provides direction and coordination for USDA's nutrition research and policy activities. The Center publishes the *Family Economics and Nutrition Review* and *Expenditures on Children by Families*, and in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, develops and publishes the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.



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## ***Food Safety Services***

**FOOD SAFETY INSPECTION SERVICE** administers the federal meat and poultry inspection program to assure safety, wholesomeness and truthful labeling of these food products; and conducts food safety consumer education program.

### ***FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE***

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# Marketing and Regulatory Programs

**AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE** provides market news reports; develops quality grade standards for agricultural commodities; provides voluntary grading services for livestock, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, cotton and tobacco; administers marketing regulatory programs, marketing agreements and orders, and research and promotion programs; administers national organic standards activities; administers USDA's laboratory accreditation program; administers federal-state marketing improvement programs, wholesale facilities research programs, and food purchases for USDA food assistance programs; and is the coordinator for USDA's pesticide data program and pesticide recordkeeping program activities.

**ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE** administers regulatory programs to control or eradicate animal and plant pests and diseases; enforces domestic and port-of-entry agricultural quarantines; licenses and assures safety and effectiveness of veterinary biological products; ensures the safety of agricultural products of biotechnology; enforces the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts; administers programs providing protection to livestock and crops from depredation by rodents, birds and predatory animals; and conducts cooperative programs to eradicate animal and plant pests and diseases in other countries.

**GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION** facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products and promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture. One of GIPSA's programs, the Packers and Stockyards Programs, ensures open and competitive markets for livestock, meat, and poultry. The other, the Federal Grain Inspection Service, facilitates the marketing of U.S. grain and related agricultural products by providing the market with Federal quality standards and a uniform system for applying them.

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***Natural Resources and Environment***

**FOREST SERVICE** administers programs for applying sound conservation and utilization practices to natural resources of the national forests and national grasslands, for promoting these practices on all forest lands through cooperation with states and private landowners and for carrying out extensive forest and range research.

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE** provides leadership and administers programs to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment. Working with landowners and operators in local conservation districts, NRCS addresses this country's natural resource problems as they affect private lands in agriculture and other uses. NRCS is the lead agency in USDA for conservation and administers several programs including, the environmental quality incentives programs, wetlands reserve program, wildlife habitat incentives program, and watershed protection and flood prevention program; leads the national cooperative soil survey and national resource inventory; and provides USDA leadership in assisting landowners and local groups in resource conservation and development projects.

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## ***Research, Education, and Economics Programs***

**AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE** conducts mission-oriented research to insure adequate protection of food and agricultural products to meet nutritional and other needs of American consumers in the animal and plant sciences, including disease and pest controls, soil and water conservation, postharvest processing and storage of commodities, safety of food, human nutrition, and integration of agricultural systems. **In addition, ARS** measures food consumption and dietary levels of the population; develops standard reference tables on the nutritive values of foods; and develops and cooperates with others in the development of materials to aid the public in meeting dietary needs, with emphasis on good nutrition, appropriate cost, palatability, safety, avoiding food waste, and conserving energy. ARS also operates the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC., and the National Agricultural Library (NAL) in Beltsville, MD.

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY** provides technical information on agricultural research and related subjects to scientists, educators and farmers using computer data bases; coordinates and is primary resource for national network of state land grant university and field libraries; and serves as the U.S. center for the international agriculture information system.

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE** administers certain federal funds appropriated for agricultural and forestry research at state agricultural experiment stations, forestry schools, 1890 universities and Tuskegee University, and selected veterinary schools; helps coordinate regional research and research planning on a national and regional basis; and conducts competitive and special research grants programs and maintains the Current Research Information System (CRIS) of state and federal research records for publicly supported agricultural and forestry research. **CSREES** links research-based information and technology to help people improve their lives through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs; and serves as the federal partner in the Cooperative Extension System networking with Extension professionals at land-grant universities throughout the United States and its territories, and local offices in more than 3,000 counties across the Nation.

**ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE** conducts research in domestic and foreign agricultural economics; analyzes factors affecting agriculture, farm productivity, financing, use of resources and potentials of rural areas; evaluates marketing potentials and development and marketing costs; studies U.S. trade in agricultural products and the role of agriculture in economic development of other nations; and reports situation and outlook, commodity projections, price spreads, and analysis of U.S. farm commodity programs. Office of Energy and New Uses coordinates USDA's energy policy, including all issues dealing with agricultural energy use and agricultural impacts of energy development and use; coordinates the energy activities of all USDA agencies; and identifies information resource personnel in other agencies.

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE** NASS conducts monthly and annual surveys and prepares official USDA data and estimates of production, supply, prices, and other information necessary to maintain orderly agricultural operations. Through the Agricultural Statistics Board, about 400 National reports are released to the public every year with estimates covering about 120 crops and 45 livestock items.

NASS also conducts the census of agriculture which is currently conducted every 5 years. The

next census of agriculture will be conducted in 1997. The census is a complete accounting of U.S. agricultural production and the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every county in the Nation. The 1997 census will contain data on land use and ownership, operator characteristics, crops, machinery and equipment, livestock, fertilizer, poultry, chemicals, market value of products, energy expenditures, irrigated land, production expenses, type of organization, farm programs, and corporate structure.

## ***AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE***

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**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**

There are a variety of ways to obtain NASS reports, data products, and services:

Reports/Publications Sales Order Desk      1-800-999-6779    FAX   703-834-0110  
(Free catalog available upon request)

Internet World Wide Web: <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>  
Gopher Site/Telenet/FTP: HOST = usda.mannlib.cornell.edu

**NASSFax (Autofax)** 202-720-2000

(To obtain current U.S. summary pages and highlights of selected reports, pick up the receiver on your facsimile machine, dial the number, listen and follow the voice prompts. Ask for Document Number 0411 for a complete listing of NASS reports/highlights available from the autofax.)

**Information Hotline** 1-800-727-9540 FAX 1-800-727-9540  
For general agricultural statistics or further information about NASS or its products or services  
Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. M-F [nass@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass@nass.usda.gov)

Census of Agriculture Information 1-800-523-3215 FAX 301-763-8499  
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Census Planning and Analysis . . . . . 301-763-8564

## Forecasts and Estimates

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Statistical Research . . . . .703-235-5211

NASS Freedom of Information Officer. . . . .301-344-2066  
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(Replace asterisks with State code, such as AL for Alabama)

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Arkansas (Little Rock, AR)	501-296-9926
California (Sacramento, CA)	916-498-5161
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Delaware (Dover, DE)	302-739-4811
Florida (Orlando, FL)	407-648-6013
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Hawaii (Honolulu, HI)	808-973-2907
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Iowa (Des Moines, IA)	515-284-4340
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Maryland (Annapolis, MD)	410-841-5740
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Nevada (Reno, NV)	702-784-5584
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Utah (Salt Lake City, UT)	801-524-5003
Virginia (Richmond, VA)	804-771-2493
Washington (Olympia, WA)	360-902-1940
West Virginia (Charleston, WV)	304-345-5958
Wisconsin (Madison, WI)	608-224-4848
Wyoming (Cheyenne, WY)	307-772-2181

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# *Rural Development*

USDA’s Rural Development mission area helps to overcome the problems and fulfill the promise of rural America. Rural Development programs improve the quality of life for rural residents by creating quality housing, a vibrant rural business sector and by ensuring that rural areas are served by utilities and the Information Superhighway. This USDA mission area is comprised of the **Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)**, **Rural Housing Service (RHS)**, **Rural Utilities Service (RUS)**, and the **Office of Community Development (OCD)**. RBS’ emphasis is on making loan guarantees or direct loans for projects that preserve or create quality jobs and/or promote a clean rural environment. The Cooperative Services program of RBS provides technical assistance, research and educational materials to strengthen the Nation’s rural cooperatives and to help develop new cooperatives. RHS provides loans and grants that help more than 65,000 moderate-, low-, or very-low-income families secure quality housing each year. The Community Facilities Loan program of RHS builds or improves facilities that provide health care, public safety or other vital public services in rural communities. RUS helps to finance electric, telecommunications, water and wastewater facilities that serve rural



areas. The RUS distance learning and medical link programs offer improved education and health services to isolated rural areas. OCD administers the Rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities program, which provides revitalization for economically depressed rural areas.

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## Other USDA Offices

### OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST** advises the Secretary of Agriculture on policies and programs affecting U.S. agriculture and rural areas, and informs the Secretary on related economic developments. The Office also is a focal point for farm labor and sustainable development issues within USDA. Two units under the OCE coordinate the Department’s work in economic forecasting and risk analysis:

**World Agricultural Outlook Board** coordinates USDA’s supply and use commodity forecasts and agricultural situation and outlook forecasts, issues monthly U.S. and world supply and demand estimates; leads department weather, climate, and remote sensing activities; assesses the impact of weather on agriculture; and coordinates USDA’s annual Outlook Forum.

**Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis** reviews and approves risk assessments and cost-benefit analyses associated with major human health, safety, and environmental regulations. It also serves as a focal point for risk assessment issues and methods in USDA.

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World Agricultural Outlook Board	202-720-5447 rbridge@oce.usda.gov	Rm5143-S	Washington, DC 20250-3812 FAX 202-690-1805

Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis	202-720-8022 aahl@oce.usda.gov	Rm5248-S	Washington, D.C. 20250-3811 FAX 202-720-1815
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## ***NATIONAL APPEALS DIVISION***

**NATIONAL APPEAL DIVISION**, operating as an independent entity, makes final determinations on administrative appeals of USDA program decisions.

Freedom of Info Act Officer Larry Shrum	703-305-1164 FAX 703-305-1496	Rm 1113	Park Office Center Alexandria, VA 22302
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## ***OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS***

**OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS** provides direction and administration of the Department's budgetary functions; reviews program and legislative proposals for program and budget related implications; analyzes program and resource issues and alternatives; and provides departmentwide coordination for and participation in the presentation of budget related matters to the committees of Congress, the press and publics. OBPA also provides departmentwide coordination of the preparation and processing of the legislative program and legislative reports, and departmentwide coordination and processing of regulations.

Freedom of Info Act Officer Jacquelyn Patterson	202-720-1272 jcp@obpa.usda.gov	Rm118-E	Washington, DC 20250 FAX 202-690-3673
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## ***OFFICE OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER***

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## ***OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL***

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL** provides legal counsel and services to the Secretary of Agriculture and all USDA agencies.

Freedom of Info Act Attorney Kenneth Cohen	202-720-5565	Rm2321-S	Washington, DC 20250 FAX 202-720-5837
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**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL** conducts and supervises audits and investigations relating to USDA's programs and operations; provides leadership and coordination and recommends policies for activities designed to prevent and detect fraud and abuse and to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness in USDA programs and operations; and keeps the Secretary and Congress fully informed of problems and deficiencies relating to administration of USDA programs, operations and actions designed to correct such problems and deficiencies.

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**DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION**

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**OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION**

**OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION** provides leadership, direction and coordination for USDA's programs for small and disadvantaged businesses and competition advocacy.

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**OFFICE OF CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**

**OFFICE OF CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER** is responsible for assuring that information technology is acquired and information resources are managed effectively; for developing and maintaining a sound and integrated information technology architecture for USDA; and for monitoring the performance of USDA's information technology programs.

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